

Seattle Municipal Code – Residential Small Lots and Cottage Housing Developments

Title 23 - LAND USE CODE

Subtitle III Land Use Regulations

Division 2 Authorized Uses and Development Standards

Chapter 23.43 - Residential Small Lot

SMC 23.43.006 Residential Small Lot zone, principal uses permitted outright.

The following principal uses shall be permitted outright in the Residential Small Lot (RSL) zone:

- A. Single-family Dwelling Unit on One (1) Lot. The designation RSL without a suffix shall indicate that a detached single-family dwelling unit on one (1) lot is the only residential structure type allowed in the zone.
- B. Tandem Houses, pursuant to a neighborhood plan adopted or amended by the City Council after January 1, 1995. The designation RSL/T shall indicate that in addition to detached single-family dwelling units on individual lots, tandem houses are allowed in the zone.
- C. Cottage Housing Developments, pursuant to a neighborhood plan adopted or amended by the City Council after January 1, 1995. The designation RSL/C shall indicate that in addition to detached single-family dwelling units on individual lots, cottage housing developments are allowed in the zone.
- D. The designation RSL/TC shall indicate that in addition to detached single-family dwelling units on individual lots, tandem houses and cottage housing developments are allowed in the zone.

SMC 23.43.008 Development standards for one dwelling unit per lot.

- A. Lot Area. Minimum lot area for one (1) detached dwelling unit shall be two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet.
- B. Height Limit and Roof Pitch. The basic height limit shall be twenty-five (25) feet. The ridge of pitched roofs with a minimum slope of three to twelve (3:12) may extend above the height limit to thirty (30) feet. All parts of the roof above twenty-five (25) feet shall be pitched.
- C. Structure Depth. The depth of any structure shall not exceed sixty (60) feet. Decks, balconies, and bay windows shall be excluded from measurement for the purposes of this provision.
- D. Yards and Setbacks.
 1. Front and Rear Yards.
 - a. The sum of the front yard plus the rear yard shall be a minimum of thirty (30) feet.
 - b. In no case shall either yard have a depth of less than ten (10) feet.
 - c. If recommended in a neighborhood plan adopted or amended by the City Council after January 1, 1995, an ordinance designating an area as RSL may require front and/or rear yard setbacks greater than ten (10) feet, provided that the requirement of subsection D1a of this section shall not be increased or decreased, and the requirement of subsection D1b of this section shall not be reduced.
 2. Side Setbacks. The required side setback shall be five (5) feet. The side setback may be averaged. No portion of the side setback shall be less than three (3) feet, except as follows:
 - a. Street side setbacks shall be a minimum of five (5) feet.

b. If an easement is provided along a side lot line of the abutting lot sufficient to leave a ten (10) foot separation between the two (2) principal structures of the two (2) lots, the required side yard may be reduced from the requirement of subsection D2 above. The easement shall be recorded with the King County Department of Records and Elections. The easement shall provide access for normal maintenance activities to the principal structure on the lot with less than the required side setback. No principal structure shall be located in the easement, except that the eaves of a principal structure may project a maximum of eighteen (18) inches into the easement. No portion of any structure, including eaves, shall cross the property line.

E. Parking. 1. One (1) parking space per dwelling unit shall be required as provided for single-family structures in Chapter 23.54, Quantity and Design Standards for Access and Off-street Parking.

2. Access. Access to parking shall be from the alley when the property abuts a platted alley improved to the standards of subsection C of Section 23.53.030, Alley improvements in all zones, or when the Director determines that alley access is feasible and desirable to mitigate parking access impacts.

3. Location.

a. Parking shall be located on the same lot as the principal structure.

b. Parking may be in or under a structure, or outside a structure, provided that:

(1) Parking shall not be located in the front yard;

(2) Parking shall not be located in a side setback abutting street or in the first ten (10) feet of a rear yard abutting a street.

SMC 23.43.012 Cottage Housing Developments (CHDs)

A. Accessory dwelling units shall not be permitted in cottage housing developments.

B. Density and Minimum Lot Area.

1. In cottage housing developments (CHDs), the permitted density shall be one (1) dwelling unit per one thousand six hundred (1,600) square feet of lot area.

2. Cottage housing developments shall contain a minimum of four (4) cottages arranged on at least two (2) sides of a common open space, with a maximum of twelve (12) cottages per development.

3. The minimum lot area for a cottage housing development shall be six thousand four hundred (6,400) square feet.

4. On a lot to be used for a cottage housing development, existing detached single-family residential structures, which may be nonconforming with respect to the standards of this section, shall be permitted to remain, but the extent of the nonconformity may not be increased.

C. Height Limit and Roof Pitch.

1. The height limit permitted for structures in cottage housing developments shall be eighteen (18) feet.

2. The ridge of pitched roofs with a minimum slope of six to twelve (6:12) may extend up to twenty-eight (28) feet. The ridge of pitched roofs with a minimum slope of four to twelve (4:12) may extend up to twenty-three (23) feet. All parts of the roof above eighteen (18) feet shall be pitched.

D. Lot Coverage and Floor Area.

1. The maximum lot coverage permitted for principal and accessory structures in cottage housing developments shall not exceed forty (40) percent.

2. The lot coverage for an individual principal structure in a cottage housing development shall not exceed six hundred fifty (650) square feet.

3. The total floor area of each cottage shall not exceed either 1.5 times the area of the main level or nine hundred seventy-five (975) square feet, whichever is less. Enclosed space in a cottage located either above the main level and more than twelve (12) feet above finished grade, or below the main level, shall be limited to no more than fifty (50) percent of the enclosed space of the main level, or three hundred seventy-five (375) square feet, whichever is less. This restriction applies regardless of whether a floor is proposed in the enclosed space, but shall not apply to attic or crawl spaces.

E. Yards.

1. Front Yards. The front yard for cottage housing developments shall be an average of ten (10) feet, and at no point shall be less than five (5) feet.

2. Rear Yards. The minimum rear yard for a cottage housing development shall be ten (10) feet.

3. Side Yards. The minimum required side yard for a cottage housing development shall be five (5) feet. When there is a principal entrance along a side facade, the side yard shall be no less than ten (10) feet along that side for the length of the pedestrian route. This ten (10) foot side yard shall apply only to a height of eight (8) feet above the access route.

4. Interior Separation for Cottage Housing Developments. There shall be a minimum separation of six (6) feet between principal structures. Facade of principal structures facing facades of accessory structures shall be separated by a minimum of three (3) feet. When there is a principal entrance on an interior facade of either or both of the facing facades, the minimum separation shall be ten (10) feet.

F. Required Open Space.

1. Quantity of Open Space. A minimum of four hundred (400) square feet per unit of landscaped open space is required. This quantity shall be allotted as follows:

a. A minimum of two hundred (200) square feet per unit shall be private usable open space; and

b. A minimum of one hundred fifty (150) square feet per dwelling unit shall be provided as common open space.

2. Development Standards.

a. Private usable open space shall be provided at ground level in one (1) contiguous parcel with a minimum area of two hundred (200) square feet. No horizontal dimension of the open space shall be less than ten (10) feet.

b. Required common open space shall be provided at ground level in one (1) contiguous parcel with a minimum area of one hundred fifty (150) square feet per unit. Each cottage shall abut the common open space, and the common open space shall have cottages abutting at least two (2) sides.

c. The minimum horizontal dimension for open space shall be ten (10) feet.

G. Parking

1. One (1) parking space per dwelling unit shall be required, as provided in Chapter 23.54.

2. Access. Access to parking shall be from the alley when property abuts a platted alley improved to the standards of subsection C of Section 23.53.030 or when the Director determines that alley access is feasible and desirable to mitigate parking access impacts.

3. Location.

a. Parking shall be on the same lot as the cottage housing development.

b. Parking may be in or under a structure, or outside a structure, provided that:

(1) The parking is screened from direct street view by one (1) or more street-facing facades, by garage doors, or by a fence and landscaping as provided in subsection D of Section 23.45.018.

(2) Parking outside a structure may not be located between cottages.

(3) Parking may not be located in the front yard.

(4) Parking may be located between any structure and the rear lot line of the lot, or between any structure and a side lot line which is not a street side lot line.